

Name: Ben Peters

STEP Project Category: Education Abroad

STEP Faculty Member: Dr. Krista Kecskemety

Major: Civil Engineering

Engineering the Castles and Cathedrals of England and Wales



What Did I Learn?:

I learned about a great many things while participating in this trip. First, I learned about the history and building techniques that went into creating some of the oldest and most famous structures in the world. I also learned a great deal about English culture by studying it first hand. Being able to see the world they live in and then comparing it to how we act and interact in the United States was a very cool experience. Finally, I also learned how to go through customs at an airport, check in, and board a plane by myself, which was a very instructive, yet stressful, experience.

Why Did I Pick This Project?:

I picked this project because I was looking for new experiences. Before this trip, the only other time I had travelled abroad was to Niagara Falls when I was 8. Due to this, travelling to another country, specifically one in Europe, was always a dream that I thought was impossible to achieve. However, this program allowed me to not only get to see a foreign country, but also allowed me to learn about the history of England interactively. I've always been interested in history, specifically military history, and being able to see castles in person put into perspective just how old the structures are. It was both exciting and awe-inspiring to be able to see a building that is nearly 3 times as old as the United States still standing today. Doing this project allowed me to explore the historical sites that I had read about, but never thought I would get to see in person.

For my STEP project, I decided to participate in the "Engineering the Castles and Cathedrals of England and Wales" study abroad experience. This trip lasted 2 weeks and involved travelling to different historical sites throughout both England and Wales, mainly castles and cathedrals, and learning about both the history of the site and the techniques that engineers of the past used to construct them. Along with this, this trip was designed to help students think about how each site played a part in not just the history of its region, but also the turbulent, connected history of England and Wales. To accomplish this, each student was assigned a specific site that they would research and serve as the tour guide for the group when visiting the site. My site was Harlech Castle, an imposing fortress on a cliff face overlooking the Irish Sea on the coast of Wales.



Impact on My Goals and Future:

Being able to see another culture and gaining experience at living abroad could very well help me in the future during my professional career. One of my goals for the future is to work for a civil engineering firm specializing in building large structures. As a lifelong sports fan, my dream job would be to work for a firm that would help with designing and constructing the new era of high-tech stadiums. Working for such a company would require me to travel, and in some cases, could require me to travel outside the country to meet with other professionals. The experience I now have in quickly learning and respecting the country and customs of another country could be very helpful in establishing good relationships with engineers from other nations. This project has also made me much more comfortable at not just living abroad, but also the ins and outs of travelling overseas.

Favorite Experiences

- Along with visiting and exploring different castles and cathedrals, our group was also able to see Stonehenge and tour big cities such as York and London.
- While in Wales, we were fortunate enough to stay in a seaside resort while staying in Llandudno.
- The castle I presented on was Harlech Castle, which is located on the Welsh coast right on the Irish Sea. Being able to look out to the water from the castle was a surreal experience, as the experience felt like it came straight out of a medieval tale.
- Watching "football" (not soccer) in a pub with locals helped me understand just how much the people of Great Britain care about and love the sport.



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

STEP

Second-year Transformational
Experience Program